

Justices Chamberlin, Kitchens, Maxwell and Beam sworn in January 3

January 3, 2017

New Supreme Court Justice Robert P. Chamberlin and incumbent Justices James W. Kitchens, James D. Maxwell II and Dawn H. Beam took the oath of office today in Jackson.

“I’m looking very much forward to this. I’m looking forward to getting to work and doing this job,” Justice Chamberlin said.

Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. said, “We are very excited about having him on the court.” He noted that Justice Chamberlin has 12 years of experience as a trial judge and presided over one of the state’s largest drug courts.

Chief Justice Waller administered the oaths first to incumbent justices, then to Justice Chamberlin. Justice Chamberlin’s wife Kim Chamberlin held the Bible. She and their son William Chamberlin, 19, helped Justice Chamberlin don his robe. Justice Chamberlin kept the same robe that he wore as a trial judge.

Justice Chamberlin will hold a formal investiture ceremony on Sunday, Jan. 8, at 1:30 p.m. at the DeSoto County Courthouse, 2535 Highway 51 South in Hernando.

Justice Chamberlin, 51, of Hernando, was elected in a runoff election on Nov. 29, 2016, to an open seat for the 33-county District 3, Place 1 on the Supreme Court. He was elected to the position previously held by Justice Ann H. Lamar of Senatobia, who retired Dec. 31, 2016.

Justice Chamberlin served for 12 years as a circuit judge of the 17th Circuit District. The district includes DeSoto, Panola, Tallahatchie, Tate and Yalobusha counties. He created the district’s Drug Court in 2006. He served as chairman and vice-chairman of the Conference of Circuit Judges.

Justice Chamberlin served as a state senator for five years, representing Senate District 1 of DeSoto County. He served as a municipal judge in Hernando for eight years, starting in 1991, a year after he was admitted to the bar. He was in private law practice for 14 years, and served as attorney for the DeSoto County



Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr., at left, administers the oath to Justice Robert P. Chamberlin, second from right. Justice Chamberlin’s wife Kim Chamberlin holds the Bible, and their son William Chamberlin holds the robe.

Board of Supervisors for four years.

Justice Chamberlin grew up in Hernando. He graduated from Hernando High School and attended Northwest Community College. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and a law degree from the University of Mississippi.

Justice Kitchens, of Crystal Springs, has served on the Supreme Court for eight years. He began his second term on the court. He previously served for nine years as district attorney in Copiah, Lincoln, Pike and Walthall counties. He was in private law practice for 32 years.

Justice Maxwell, of Oxford, began his second year on the Supreme Court. Gov. Phil Bryant appointed him on Jan. 1, 2016. Justice Maxwell was elected without opposition in November. He previously served for seven years on the Mississippi Court of Appeals. He was an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Mississippi for more than seven years.

Justice Beam, of Sumrall, was appointed by Gov. Bryant to the Supreme Court on Feb. 16, 2016. She was elected to an eight-year term in November. She served for five years as a chancellor of the Tenth Chancery District, which includes Forrest, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River and Perry counties. She served for three years as county prosecutor for Lamar County.



Supreme Court Justices took the oath of office on Tuesday, Jan. 3, in Jackson. Pictured are, left to right, Justice Dawn H. Beam and her parents, Rev. Gene Henderson and Dorothy Henderson; Judicial Assistant Jessica Hartzog; Justice James D. Maxwell II; Justice James W. Kitchens and his wife Mary Kitchens.